

## **UNIFIED ARIZONA VETERANS – December 1, 2007**

Call to Order: The regular meeting of the Unified Arizona Veterans was called to order at 10:00 a.m. with proper ceremonies by Chairman Gary Fredricks. Chaplain Bo Bohach asked for a moment of silence in tribute to Medal of Honor Recipient Sylvestre Herrera who passed away November 26th. The roll call was called along with the dues-paid status of the organizations; a quorum was established.

Introductions: Bill Moore of Peoria was introduced.

The minutes of the November meeting were approved as corrected to include the distribution of the accepted bylaws. The Treasurer's report was accepted by a motion from Lew Bradley, seconded and carried.

### **Reports:**

#### **General Maxon, Director, Arizona Department of Veterans' Services**

- Gen. Maxon related that he found the Hall of Fame to be an amazing event and a great experience.
- The Troops to Teachers program provides a stipend, in addition to GI Bill benefits, for service in under-served areas. The program was formerly under the umbrella of the Department of Education but has been moved to ADVS Education office.
- The Helmets to Hardhats program for construction trades allows for applicable skills from military service in the apprentice programs and includes advancement to journeyman for 10 or more years of proficient experience.
- The Military Family Relief Fund is for families of military who are killed in action and for travel for the families of those with serious injury. The program is funded through donations and a tax credit available up to \$200.00. The fund is specified for Arizona National Guard and active military who are deployed from Arizona military installations. ADVS will request Sen. Marsha Arzberger to introduce amendments to the law to modify the eligibility. Relief Fund meetings are subject to open meeting laws; an exemption will be requested to allow the committee to discuss requests while maintaining the confidentiality of the applicant.
- The Yuma Veterans Park construction is in progress. Arizona Veterans Donation Funds will be used to complete the project.

#### **Bob Delker, MOAA reported that**

- The 2008 COLA is expected to be 2.3% for VA, Social Security, and Military Retirement.
- There is a 9.9% decrease in the amount paid by Tri-Care to physicians. MOAA is monitoring in an attempt to restore higher payments and reduce the number of doctors who are opting out of accepting Tri-care as a plan.

#### **Mel Brody, Vice Chairman**

- Mel provided an update on the carillon. He anticipates that the dedication will be held in the spring. Invitations will be sent to contributors. He announced that \$14,000 has been collected through the Hall of Fame Society's website. John Aldecoa announced that \$5,000 is coming from the American Legion.
- Various options are being considered for the museum. Chairman Fredricks asked that members consider volunteering for a committee to investigate the matter further.

### **New Business**

The Board of Directors will meet monthly, one hour before the UAV meeting.

Chairman Fredricks distributed copies of letters written to the Arizona Governor, Speaker of the House, and President of the Senate regarding the state budget and the necessity to protect veterans' programs from budget cuts. A motion was made by Jesse Gersten to approve sending the letters, seconded and carried. The letter will be made available to all organizations to use as a model for the VSO's to write letters of their own.

By general consensus, "a legislative day at the capitol" will be built into the budget.

Discussion was initiated regarding accepting new members into UAV. The determination of eligibility will be a function of the Board of Directors; however, Northwest Valley Veterans was denied membership in the past since it was determined to be a consortium as opposed to an organization. A motion was made by Carol Hamburger to reconsider Northwest Valley Veterans for membership and to accept the group as members if they would care to join. The motion was seconded and carried.

A motion was made by Donna Adams to move the July 2008 meeting to the second Saturday in July to avoid conflict with the July 4th weekend, seconded and carried.

The schedule for the funeral and graveside services for Sylvestre Herrera was handed out. Donations are being accepted to help with the reception following the service.

**Good of the Order**

- The Chandler Ostrich Festival will be held the 2nd weekend in March.
- The Legislative Committee will meet on December 14th at ASVH before the Advisory Commission meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 with proper ceremonies to meet again January 5, 2008.

Donna Adams, Secretary